

The Journal of The Royal College of General Practitioners

The British Journal of General Practice

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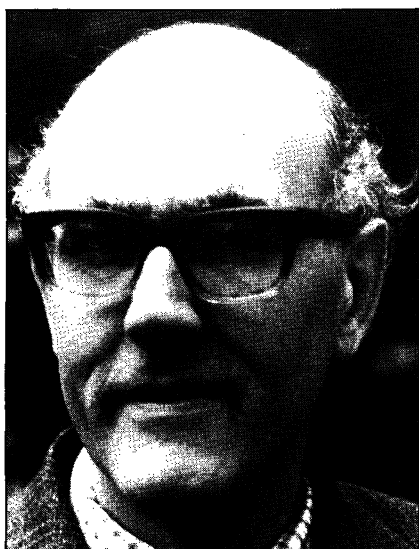
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NEWS AND VIEWS

COLLEGE NEWS

Communications Executive

Dr Denis Pereira Gray, Chairman of the Communications Division Executive, reports on recent and present activities.



Dr Denis Pereira Gray

The new Communications Executive took office for the first time on 14 November 1981. As in the other new divisions, the chairman was selected by Council at its first meeting immediately after the Annual General Meeting.

The first 18 months have been interesting and have been concerned mainly with setting up a broad range of activities for which a budget of over £200,000 has been allocated.

Publications Committee

Publications Committee, which previously had been a separate committee, now came within the ambit of the division and under the chairmanship of Dr Colin Waine; it has had an exceptionally busy period.

Within 18 months there has been a change of editorship of the *Journal* and the opening of the new *Journal* office in Edinburgh, the separation of *News and Views* within the *Journal* under a new editor, the nomination of the editor of the new *International Journal of Family Practice*, the introduction of the new *Members' Reference Book* and

publication by the College of its first book—*Epidemiology and Research in General Practice* by Ian Watson.

The committee has also supervised the publication of *A History of the Royal College of General Practitioners—the First 25 Years and Present State and Future Needs in General Practice* by John Fry (Sixth Edition). The Exeter publications office has been consolidated, having taken on responsibility for the *Reference Book* as well as *Reports from General Practice and Occasional Papers*.

The media

Another major activity has been the College's involvement with the fourth television channel and the important 'Well Being' series for which Dr Simon Smail and Dr John Bennison have been the medical editors.

The higher profile which the College is now adopting and its involvement with the BBC has led to the formation of a Media Committee which is chaired by Dr Clive Froggatt and which coordinates all the College's relationships with the media.

International policy

The College has never before reviewed its international relationships or sought to form any kind of integrated foreign policy. A new committee was formed within the division under the chairmanship of the President, Dr J. A. R. Lawson, and is expected to report later in 1983.

New principals and trainees

A topic of special importance to the College is its relationships with new principals and trainees and a working party has been formed, led by Dr Clare Ronalds, which includes both the trainee representatives on the Council. This working party has already conducted a survey of views in the faculties and is preparing a working paper on how to improve these relationships. At present about 400 trainees have joined the College as associates.

Other topics

Among the many other topics that have been considered by the Communications Division during the last year

have been support for the World Health Organization's Expert Committee on Smoking which was subsequently adopted by the Council; the importance of presentation days organized by the College; the possibility of a new videotape of College activities and support for the Cleminson Room on the ground floor at Princes Gate.

Publications Sales Department

The College's Publications Sales Department has moved out of Princes Gate. From now on the address is Publications Sales Department, Royal College of General Practitioners, 8 Queen Street, Edinburgh EH2 1JE.

MRCGP Examination results

The following candidates were successful in the Membership examination of June/July 1983.

(*denotes distinction)

J. J. Adair, Karen P. Adam, Denise M. Adams, Margaret E. Adams, B. D. Adamson, Kenneth Addley, J. S. Allen, Patricia K. Allen, Alison Allister, Jane P. Allred, Allan Allsopp, Helen A. Ambrose, D. G. Anderson (Ayrshire), D. G. Anderson (Yorkshire), D. M. Andrews, D. P. M. Archer, J. R. Arden Jones, Ali Asghar, Pamela S. Ashton, D. R. Atkins.

J. A. Bailey, P. A. Bailey, M. R. Baker, Fiona E. Ballantyne, D. J. Barford, P. W. Barritt, Jennie M. Barrow, P. M. Barrow, H. P. Barry, *S. B. Barton, J. N. R. Bashford, Jennifer A. Batty, S. R. Beaven, Gillian S. Beck, T. R. D. Bell, Frederique Bentley, M. J. Berber, A. R. Bigg, Julie A. Bignell, D. S. Binnie, B. J. Bintcliffe, Alison C. Birkmyre, Jennifer M. Bloomer, G. M. Bolton, A. J. Bond, B. P. Booth, N. S. Booth, P. J. Booth, S. D. G. Bowe, R. L. Bowen, A. R. Bowering, Susan J. Bowie, Sheila J. Bowman, A. L. Boyd, Doreen D. Boyd, *T. J. Boyd, David Bracher, J. H. Bradley, Jane Bradnock, L. R. Brann, D. A. Breen, C. J. Brian, Pauline R. Brimblecome, Maura Briscoe, P. H. Brookes, Carolyn Broom, D. M. G. Brown, M. A. I. Brown, P. T. K. Brown, A. J. Brzezicki, D. D. Buckley, Ruth M. Buckley, D. W. Bullock, P. J. Burgess, P. D. Burke, P. G. Burke, R. A. Burns, Graham Burt, Anne C. Bush, J. K. Bush.

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J. A. Charlton, P. P. Charlton, R. S. Charlton, J. H. Chatterjee, D. A. Chidwick, H. B. J. Chishick, C. T. Chiu, Janet P. Clarke, R. G. Clarke, C. D. Clayton Payne, A. D. Clift, Claire E. Cockram, I. A. Cocks, K. A. Collett, T. McQ. Collins, A. D. Colquhoun, P. W. B. Colvin, Carmel N. Condon, T. F. X. P. Corbett, P. R. Corrie, J. G. Corrigan, J. P. Cox, Jean Cox, Gillian M. Crampton, R. M. Crawford, C. D. Creedon, R. A. Creek, F. R. G. Crosby, I. S. Crothers, Joanna M. Crowley, W. L. Cuddihy, Patricia M. Curry, *Mary M. Cuthbert.

Vivien A. Dale, Elizabeth J. Dagleish, C. J. Daniell, Jyotirmay Datta, J. N. Davis, P. A. Davis, S. M. Davis, M. G. Dawes, D. F. Dayson, J. D. Delap, D. S. Delmonte, T. P. Dennehy, O. Paula Devlin, B. H. Dexter, M. M. A. Diab, S. R. Dickson, Barbara Dixon, G. A. Dobson, P. A. K. Donovan, R. F. Dorling, Deirdre M. Dougan, N. T. E. Douglas, *Helen M. Downing, Catherine R. Drummond, J. L. Duck, T. A. Dudgeon, Frances L. Dudley, Andrew Duffin-Jones, P. N. Duignan, J. W. M. Dunn, R. M. W. Dunn.

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Susan F. Yates, Anna B. W. Zahorski.

Obituary

Dr Arthur G. Reid

The sudden death of Arthur Reid on 20 July 1983 has deprived the College of a Fellow who, throughout his professional life, demonstrated all the qualities of the beloved physician. Endowed with endless patience and a pawky sense of humour which he owed to his origin in the north-east of Scotland, he was loved by the patients in his practice in Auchterarder who, for over 30 years, enjoyed his professional skill and, above all, his wise counsel.

An excellent clinician, he had also an enquiring mind and was interested in research in and into general practice. This interest was obvious in his own practice and also during his time as research associate to the Scottish Gen-

eral Practice Research Unit where he helped colleagues with an interest in research to pursue their ideas. A dedicated teacher of undergraduates and trainees, he imbued in them his love of general practice.

He got great satisfaction from his association with the College which in turn benefited from his support both in his faculty and nationally. He was Provost of the East of Scotland Faculty and represented the faculty on Scottish

Council and on Council. A man of few words, when he spoke it was always to some purpose. His work for general practice and his local community was recognized in the award of the MBE in 1977. He always involved himself deeply in local affairs and after his retirement from active practice he became chairman of the local community council. In this capacity he worked tirelessly to ensure that the local hospital, which was threatened with closure

due to financial cuts, survived. In this as in so many other things, he was successful.

First and foremost he was a family man. His wife Phyllis worked as his partner in the practice and was his constant companion. His son is in general practice in Aberdeen and his daughter is a health visitor in Edinburgh. To them we extend our sympathy.

J. A. R. LAWSON

MEDICAL NEWS

Family Practice—an international journal

Oxford University Press has announced the forthcoming publication of an addition to its range of general practice publications. The new journal, *Family Practice*, which will appear quarterly, is intended to provide a forum for the sharing of ideas and information between doctors working in different countries where not only health care systems but also cultures vary—often considerably.

The journal is designed to be of interest to all working in general practice although having an emphasis on teaching, research and the organization of services. It is intended to appeal also to those working in the fields of epidemiology, public health and medical sociology.

The editor will be Professor J. G. R. Howie. Contributions to the new journal are now welcome and should be sent to Professor Howie at the Department of General Practice, University of Edinburgh, 20 West Richmond Street, Edinburgh EH8 9DX, from whom further information can be obtained.

The first issue will appear in March 1984 and subscriptions will be offered at a reduced rate to members of the College. Information about this will appear shortly.

The United Kingdom Joint Professional Committee for Primary Health Care

The inaugural meeting of this group was held at the Royal College of Nursing on 5 July 1983. It has been set up following a series of informal talks among various organizations representing nurses and doctors about the restructuring of the NHS and its impact on the community services. The organizations represented on the Committee

are the Royal College of General Practitioners, the General Medical Services Committee, the Royal College of Midwives, the Health Visitors Association and the Royal College of Nursing.

The terms of reference of the Committee are to foster and encourage high standards of primary health care by promoting interprofessional teamwork and monitoring the provision of resources. The College's representatives are John Hasler and Bill Styles.

AUTGP Annual Scientific Meeting

The Association of University Teachers of General Practice, the membership of which comprises both full-time 'core' university staff and part-time general practitioner tutors, held its annual scientific meeting in Dundee in July. Seventy participants drawn from almost all the UK medical schools attended this conference, which had as its theme 'Teaching and Service'.

Dr Mary Neville (Dundee) presented a short account of a survey of all UK University Departments of General Practice, carried out to pilot a method for possible use more widely in Europe, to assist WHO.

The conference considered in some detail the 1980 GMC recommendations on basic medical education and the potential role of general practice in assisting undergraduates to achieve the stated objectives. Dr H. J. Wright (Leeds) stressed the complementary nature of undergraduate education and postgraduate training. He undertook to consider the outcome of the conference deliberations (involving planned group work): such commentary might influence a document on undergraduate teaching of general practice currently being prepared for the AUTGP. The large volume of presentations of original work in general

practice required simultaneous operation of two lecture theatres; pre-circulation of summaries of papers made it easier for participants to choose which sessions to attend.

One of the highlights of the conference was the presentation of work carried out by each of three Southampton undergraduates in their fourth year. The professionalism of these presentations was matched by their scientific content, and this innovation was well received by the conference.

At the annual business meeting Dr John Horder was created an Honorary Fellow of the Association.

Next year's Annual Scientific Meeting will be hosted by the Director of General Practice Studies, University of Cambridge.

Standards in health visiting practice

The Council for the Education and Training of Health Visitors has published a booklet entitled *Setting Standards in Health Visiting Practice*. This is an account of a series of workshops held in the Northern Region in 1981/1982.

The booklet can be obtained from Miss A. McClymont, Professional Officer Primary Care, National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting for Scotland, 22 Queen Street, Edinburgh EH2 1JX.

Institute of Family Therapy

The calendar of workshops and courses planned by the Institute of Family Therapy for October 1983 to June 1984 has recently been published. It can be obtained from The Course Secretary, Institute of Family Therapy, 43 New Cavendish Street, London W1. (Tel: 01-935 1651).

London or Birmingham and are not within local call distance of a dataplex link incur considerable telephone costs when making trunk calls to gain Prestel access.

It is unfortunate that British Telecom's pricing policy discriminates against rural areas. Communications are particularly important for general practitioners working in these areas; it seems a pity that they will be discouraged from using this useful medium.

PETER SAUL

22 Penycae Avenue
Gobowen
Shropshire
SV10 7UD.

Withdrawal from Benzodiazepines

Sir,
I have started a support through withdrawal scheme for people coming off benzodiazepines. The enormous amount of suffering I see makes me wonder how much information on the toxic effects of these drugs, and illness caused by their withdrawal, reaches the doctors. The pharmacological manuals grossly understate the dangers of tolerance, dependence and withdrawal that have been demonstrated so

clearly after the use of these drugs. This is not only after long-term use at high dosage, but also after very short-term use (two weeks), on a normal therapeutic dose.

We must look urgently for the most effective treatment, since a quarter of benzodiazepine users will become severely physically dependent. Widespread dependence, as much as overprescribing, must be the reason for the enormous use of these drugs.

The withdrawal syndrome has many unique features and needs to be treated as a new disease. In acute withdrawal, psychosis, convulsions and suicides are a great deal more common than the literature would suggest. The physical symptoms, many of which are not typical of anxiety, are the worst aspect of the illness. Some of the symptoms are belated and are not associated with the drugs by patient or doctor. Rebound insomnia is a persistent symptom. Unfortunately, and so often, doctors prescribe another benzodiazepine for night sedation when the patient complains of this.

Psychological dependence is less of a problem. Many users report craving for the drugs, but at the same time feel revolted by them, and angry that they have to take them to avoid withdrawal symptoms.

Thousands of people could not

possibly invent the bizarre symptoms caused by the therapeutic use of benzodiazepines and reactions to their withdrawal. Many users have to cope, not only with a frightening range of symptoms, but also with the disbelief and hostility of their doctors and families. It is not uncommon for patients to be 'struck off' if they continue to complain about withdrawal symptoms. Even when doctors are concerned and understanding about the problem, they often have little knowledge of withdrawal procedure, and even less about treatment. The drugs newsletter on benzodiazepines issued in this region will help them. Is anything being done elsewhere?

Banning benzodiazepines would be unrealistic; there is nothing to replace them. But I would urge doctors to seek more information about them, and to listen to what their patients are saying. Release and self-help groups all over the country have done wonderful work, but why should people need to form groups for an urgent medical problem? This is drug-induced disease, not drug abuse.

SHIRLEY TRICKETT
Nurse

160 Tosson Terrace
Heaton
Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 5EA.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

British Psychological Society

Dr C. P. Elliott-Binns, general practitioner, will speak on 'Back to square one: the Hippocratic approach' at an open meeting of the British Psychological Society Section of Medical Psychology and Psychotherapy.

The meeting will be held on Wednesday 28 September at 20.00 in room 97, Tuke Building, Bedford College, Regents Park, London NW1.

Paediatric Symposium: Child Health Surveillance

This symposium will be held at the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh on Wednesday 16 November 1983. The speakers will include people working in general practice, paediatrics and community medicine. Further details can be obtained from the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, 9 Queen Street, Edinburgh EH2 1JE. (Tel: Edinburgh (031-225) 7324).

CIS/MARU Symposium

The next symposium on premises will take place at College Headquarters on 2 November 1983. The two previous seminars were aimed at architects but the next seminar has been organized for general practitioners. Anyone interested in attending should contact Annie Murray, Central Information Services, The Royal College of General Practitioners, 14 Princes Gate, Hyde Park, London SW7 1PU. (Tel: 01-581 3232).

10th British Congress on the History of Medicine

The History of Medicine Society of Wales will be hosts for the Congress of the British Society for the History of Medicine on 'Child Care through the Centuries' at the picturesque Clyne Castle, Swansea between 6 and 8 April 1984.

Speakers have been invited from

many fields to cover a variety of subjects from the earliest textbooks on children's diseases to the latest ideas on the care of the newborn. The programme provides for discussions on the social, scientific and clinical aspects of the care of the infant and young child.

Those interested in attending the conference should write to Dr John Cule, Abereinion, Capel Dewi, Llandysul, Dyfed SA44 4PP, and details will be sent to them in December 1983.

How valuable is Your Time?

A symposium on Organization in General Practice is being held on Saturday 22 October 1983 at Whipps Cross Hospital, London. The symposium is approved under Section 63 and further details can be obtained from The Secretary, Medical Education Centre, Whipps Cross Hospital, London E11 1NR.

MRCGP Courses

For further details of the MRCGP Courses listed here please apply to the names and addresses that are given. Miss Judith Halliwell of the Education Division at College Headquarters, 14 Princes Gate, Hyde Park, London SW7 1PU (Tel: 01-581 3232) is endeavouring to keep an up-to-date list of these events. Course Organizers are requested to send her details when planning new MRCGP Courses.

Cheshire—25 September 1983

Dr B. W. McGuinness, Weaver Vale Practice, Hallwood Health Centre, East Lane, Runcorn, Cheshire.
Tel: 0928 711911.

Aylesbury—27 September 1983

Mrs Barbara Vaughan, The Medical School Offices, John Radcliffe Hospital, Headington, Oxford OX3 9DU.
Tel: 0865 817627

Galway—September 1983

Dr James Kent, Direen, 33 Threadneedle Street, Salthill, Galway, Eire.

North East Thames—29 and 30 September 1983

Mrs E. Titshall, North Middlesex Hospital Academic Centre, Edmonton, London N18 1QX.
Tel: 01-807 3071 x481.

Manchester—1 October 1983

Dr Norman Beenstock, Clarendon House, Clarendon Street, Hyde, Cheshire.

North West Thames—3 to 6 October 1983—for established general practitioners

Dr Martin Rhodes, RCGP, 14 Princes Gate, London SW7 1PU.

Bradford—Saturday Study Day—October 1983

Dr J. D. Sinson, Teaching Block, Littlewood Hall, The General Infirmary, Great George Street, Leeds LS1 3EX.
Tel: 0632 328511 x3028.

Southampton—15 and 16 October 1983

Mrs Vera Hill, Southampton Postgraduate Medical Centre, Southampton General Hospital, Southampton SO9 4XY.

Avon—autumn 1983—extended course

Dr Clive Richards, The Health Centre, Old Street, Clevedon, Avon.

Birmingham—December/January 1983/4—for trainees only

Dr D. Wall, Queen Elizabeth Postgraduate Medical Centre, Metchley Park Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TQ.

East Glamorgan—Tuesdays in term time

Dr W. A. Jerrett, The Clinic, Elm Road, Llanharry, Mid Glamorgan.
Tel: 0443 224309.

North Scotland—informal tutorials for regional candidates

Dr T. L. Henderson, The Health Centre, Grantown on Spey, Morayshire PH26 3HR.

Lichfield—January 1984—for trainees only

Dr D. Wall, Queen Elizabeth Postgraduate Medical Centre, Metchley Park Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TQ.

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Instructions to authors

Papers submitted for publication should not have been published before or be currently submitted to any other journal. They should be typed, on one side of the paper only, in double spacing and with generous margins. A4 is preferred paper size. The first page should contain the title, which should be as brief as possible, the name(s) of author(s), degrees, position, town of residence, and the address for correspondence.

Original articles should normally be no longer than 2,000 words, arranged in the usual order of summary, introduction, aims, method, results, references, and acknowledgements. Short reports of up to 600 words are acceptable. Letters to the Editor should be brief—400 words maximum.

Illustrations of all kinds, including photographs, are welcomed. Graphs and other line drawings need not be submitted as finished artwork—rough drawings are sufficient, provided they are clear and adequately annotated.

Metric units, SI units and the 24-hour clock are preferred. Numerals up to 10 should be spelt, those over 10 typed as figures. Use the approved names of drugs, though proprietary names may follow in brackets. Avoid abbreviations.

References should be in the Vancouver style as used in the *Journal*. Their accuracy must be checked before submission. The title page, figures, tables, legends and references should all be on separate sheets of paper.

Two copies of each article should be submitted, with a stamped addressed envelope, and the author should keep a copy. One copy will be returned if the paper is rejected.

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